

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are pending. Claims 12-22 have been withdrawn; claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, and 10 are amended; and new claims 23-24 are added.

The Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) with reference to Lewis. Lewis, however, does not teach or support a stage prop including first and second locking members located at the same distances from distal ends of the first and second side surfaces, such that when the first and second side surfaces are proximate each other, the first locking member is capable of engaging the second locking member sideways.

The Examiner indicated that Claims 2 and 3 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form with all the limitations of original Claim 1. Claim 2 has been amended so that it contains all the limitations of original claim 1. Claim 3 is now dependent on amended claim 2 instead of original claim 2. Claims 2 and 3 are now in condition for allowance.

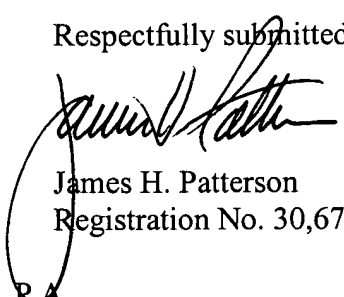
Claims 4, 5, 9, and 10 are dependent claims and are allowable at least for the reasons the claims they depend from are allowable.

Claims 23 and 24 are new. Claim 23 is the same as claim 2 (as amended) and except that the term “first locking member” replaces “male connector portion” and “second locking” replaces “female connector portion.” Claim 24 is the same as claim 3 except that it depends from claim 23 instead of claim 2.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,



James H. Patterson
Registration No. 30,673

Customer No. 24113
Patterson, Thuent, Skaar & Christensen, P.A.
4800 IDS Center
80 South 8th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-2100
Telephone: (612) 349-5741